22 years combating drivel

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THE BOSTON INFORMER

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Innovation District Housing Innovations

Photo © Iwan Baan

New Innovation District housing "shoebox units" rents start at $3,200 a month.

New rental housing in Boston's Seaport, aka Innovation, District was recently advertised, and the number and types of amenities offered to lure yuppies and fools is astounding. One property, left, features primarily one-bedroom units with a closet, microwave oven, small living room called a "denlet," and broom closet-size bathroom. The compact size of these units allowed the developer to build 2,200 units instead of the 420 units described in the Seaport District guidelines.

Competition for renters has increased as the Seaport District develops. An attitude of "can you top this?" for amenities seems to be taking over. Amenities at this development include a pet spa; indoor golf driving range; basketball court; worm composting; bike share, car share, and yacht share; Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts; fish farm; and holodeck.

Mayor Walsh thought this was a joke, and when informed this is for real, muttered something about a fool and money. He then called for a new housing task force to convene.

Pet spa occupies the second floor

Boston Opens Bars 'til 3 a.m.

Mayor Walsh's efforts to make Boston a "world class city" by allowing bars to stay open until 3:00 a.m. has led to a crush of young people racing over the bridge into Boston after last call in Cambridge. Checkpoints are also being set up for the lines of late barhoppers which are forecast to materialize at the Quincy, Milton, Chelsea and Somerville locations.

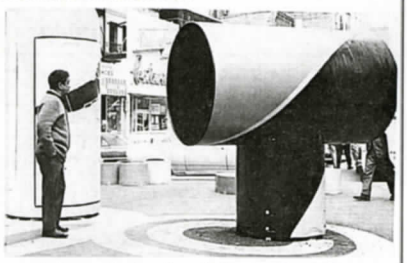
A ferry service is also being considered for return trips to some locations giving a whole new meaning to the "booze cruise." There is also some talk of opening up the medical marijuana locations after hours, but first the state must locate a legal place for a dispensary. Boston Go Green!

Library
Boston Architectural College

Mayor Walsh Seeks Ideas To 're-imagine public spaces'

Fitting in the mold of his predecessor, Mayor Walsh is looking hard at "urban mechanics." But unlike former Mayor Menino who copied everything of former New York City Mayor Bloomberg's except his speech patterns, Walsh turned to Philadelphia and has replicated its public improvements challenge. Entries are due April 4. The Boston Informer is offering these civic ideas to anyone still searching for that winning idea to submit.

- Le Mans-type automobile race in Beacon Hill using only MINI Coopers and Smart cars.
- Shovel snow from around parking meters.
- Ban cars running on fossil fuel from Boston's downtown core one weekend per month (Milan style).
- Trash cans on city streets.
- Online Geospatial Education and Geopowering Design to be offered on City of Boston Web site
- Free coffee in the City Council chambers.
- Internet viewing tubes with cellphone chargers
- Develop a virtual government with virtual revenues and virtual jobs with virtual housing and virtual commercial enterprises.



Internet viewing tube in Park Sq.

Movies Not to Miss!

American Hustle – a documentary on Whitey Bulger showing how he got to the peak of his profession through hard work and drive.

Frozen – a study of how an extreme political minority managed to bring the US Congress into deadlock with nothing accomplished.

The Lunchbox – a nostalgic look at how the advent of food trucks everywhere in the city is causing the demise of the old-fashioned workers lunch box.

In Fear – drama about Menino-era hangers-on in City Hall and their concern about new Mayor Walsh wanting fresh faces in city government.

Bad Words – an X-rated film on drivers' reactions to the detours required by the endless closings of tunnels and bridges for repair.

Divergent – the story of the lives of the increasingly wealthy 1% of the population contrasted with the lives of the increasingly poor 20% of the population.

Non-Stop – a chronicle of the 40+ futile votes to date of the Republicans in the US House of Representatives to repeal the Affordable Care Act, despite knowing the Senate will kill it. .

Casino Siting Solution Proposed by the New England Aquarium

The proposed Boston-area casino has been plagued with neighborhood opposition, land disputes and access issues. New England Aquarium CEO Bud Rice is proposing a radical solution that would not only solve all transportation and territory issues but also would provide an educational component to the casino experience.

His plan is to build the casino off the Massachusetts coast with access via a long bridge and by boat. The casino would be located in US waters, not Massachusetts, so the dispute over host community would disappear and the state would reap the casino licensing revenues.

The bridge would descend into the harbor in twin glass immersed tubes to access the casino. Rice said the New England Aquarium, Sea World and Gorton's Seafood have agreed to provide educational exhibits visible as one enters, showing displays from live animals to information on processing fish for fish sticks.

Rice believes the participation of non-profit educational organizations will take the curse off casinos, described by some as "scum-sucking addiction machines" and "the lowest form of economic development on the face of the earth."

Gov. Patrick's Last-Gasp Revenue Raisers

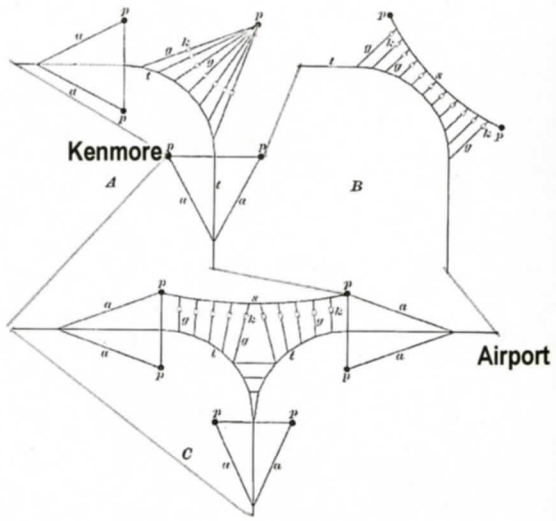
Because the city and state always need more revenue to finance projects that will probably never get done, such as renovate the Old Northern Avenue bridge, expand South Station, build and operate the North/South rail link, etc., The Boston Informer offers ideas for revenue raisers that will probably never be implemented.

- If Boston fails to get Host Community status for the proposed casinos, impose tolls on all roads going from Boston to Revere or Everett, whichever wins.
- While City Hall Plaza is dug up for the new Government Center MBTA station, charge the public for tours of the remains of Scollay Square and Hanover Street under the Plaza.
- Replace costly countdown clocks on MBTA platforms with streaming ads and add an audio ad that plays when a rider presses to call an elevator
- Institute a "Super Parker" program which for $10,000 per year entitles you to park anywhere in the city for as long as you want.
- Sell anytime access to all city and state politicians with a POOP (Politicians Open Opportunity Pass) program, with a sliding scale depending on how much the politician's POOP is worth.
- Expand All-Electronic Tolling from the Tobin Bridge to the Central Artery tunnels, finally ending the injustice that only traffic traveling east/west on the Turnpike paid tolls to finance the north/south Big Dig.

MBTA Clarifies T Access During Gov't Center Station Closure

In response to hundreds of e-mails and calls from bewildered MBTA riders and Massport CEO Thomas Glee about how to travel from Kenmore Square to Logan Airport (and reverse) during the two-plus-year shutdown of Government Center station, the MBTA's initial online information on travel options and maps droned on for more than 1,600 words and included 24 links to yet more written descriptions for various trip options.

In response the MBTA prepared this simple diagram that makes everything clear:



5 Years of Scheduled Transportation Shutdowns planned

As part of the new five-year Transportation Shutdown Plan that kicked-off with Longfellow Bridge, Prudential Tunnel, Government Center MBTA Station, Callahan Tunnel all experiencing closures, shutdowns will be slated for other sections of Boston to spread the discomfort to everyone.

Planned chaos in this sequence is under discussion: I-93 north to Somerville, I-93 south to Quincy, Harvard Bridge, Storrow Drive, Northern Avenue Bridge and Sumner Tunnel. AAA Southern New England's calls for "modal parity" resulted in planned shutdowns of the Green Line, Greenbush commuter rail and Paul Dudley White Bike Path, although these closures will be shorter so MassDOT can claim its "mode shift" plan is working.

Six-month shutdowns have been completed for Main Street, Worcester, downtown Leominster and Main Street in Springfield and went unnoticed in those locations. Uxbridge and Abington have complained about not being on the overall list as they are at the proper alphabetical range.

MassDOT will spread transportation shutdown thrill statewide

Headlines You'll Never Read

- ✔ MBTA General Manager Beverly Scott makes a boring presentation
- ✔ Boston Transportation Dept. declares 'parklets' experiment dumb and costly
- ✔ WalkBoston declares Boston 'completely walkable'
- ✔ BRA Board quizzes BRA staff on project details
- ✔ Hubway rent-a-helmet wildly popular
- ✔ Rents fall in Innovation District; exodus to Financial District stops
- ✔ Chinatown residents no longer threatened by displacement

What's Up?

Olympics 2026 "Take this off the list of objections to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Boston" exclaimed John Fish who is leading the effort to bring the games to Boston. He said Boston had spent years developing what he was told is an excellent transit system. Fish said Boston will have no trouble transporting athletes, media and spectator from Boston and environs to New Hampshire for the skiing events using the transit system shown here.

MBTA Acquires Walk-Thru Buses

The MBTA has bought eight new double-articulated buses (capacity: 322 seated) for the Rte. 1, a congested and slow route using Massachusetts Avenue. Passengers will be able to make progress on a bus stuck in traffic by walking through the bus.

Greenway Summer Activities Announced

New Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy Executive Director Jolly Brackenberry announced a partnership with the New England Aquarium to provide turtle racing on the Greenway.

Designed primarily for kids and elected officials, the races take all day with little else getting done. [Of course no real turtles will be used.]

What is This?

Be the first to correctly identify the image above and win a valuable prize. Clues may or may not be helpful.

- South American
- Red and white

Send guesses to The Boston Informer at bostoninformer@cs.com. Winner will be chosen randomly from correct entries received by April 4.

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THE BOSTON INFORMER

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Scrubway

You Were Asking

Q. I heard that the City of Boston Creative Tool Box Group is looking to sell air rights to developers for public land. The term I have heard is called airbanking instead of landbanking starting at City Hall Plaza and then moving to various City-owned parks and open spaces. Is this true?

A. Yes. The first trial "balloon" is at City Hall Plaza with air rights extending over the existing City Hall, starting 150 feet above grade and extending 300 feet or more above. Prices have not been established but we are certain that they will be sky high.

Q. More than 20 years ago the BRA developed a Master Plan for the North End, which among other things called for affordable housing on the BRA-owned Sargents Wharf. Very little of the plan has been implemented. Is this what we can expect from the current Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan?

A. Of course. These plans are only a smokescreen to hide what will really happen.

Q. John Fish, owner of a major construction company, is pushing the idea of Boston hosting the 2026 Winter Olympic Games. Isn't there a self interest conflict with that?

A. We think he likes to ski.

Q. I heard the BRA Board recently called a building under review "too boring." The BRA? Boston?

A. Hard to believe but true, and maybe the sign of new life at the BRA post-Menino. The building in question was a self-storage facility.

Q. I heard the City wants to have a lot of psychopaths to help people get around on bikes. Is this a good idea?

A. You heard wrong. The City is pursuing building "cycle tracks," basically bike lanes separated from traffic and sidewalk bike paths. Still, might not be a good idea.

Q. I understand the Greenway Conservancy is working with Hubway bikeshare to offer "extreme activities" including beehive bike tours? Is this true? Sign me up!

A. There is a buzz in the air about it.